fastened between two spokes of the buggy wheel in such a way that, at a fearful cost of agony to the unfortunate victim, the limb acted as a sort of brake which prevented the wheel from revolving and made it merely drag. The old man's arms were thrown out as if clutching for support, but in reality he had already been rendered unconscious. Almost directly in front of the Carlington residence, the horses, with the buggypole and the traces, became disengaged from the vehicle, leaving it standing there, while the frightened animals kept up their mad career till they reached the door of the livery stable where they belonged. Immediately a crowd gathered about the prostrate form of the old man, who seemed to be dead. His head and h is hands were bloody, and his face had been terribly lacerated and bruised. Kate hastily called Dr. Carlington, who ran out. The crowd made way for him, and he was speedily at the side of the old man, who had been laid on his back by kind hands.

"Is he dead?" asked one in a low tone when the Doctor had concluded a hasty examination.

"Not yet. He *may* live," was the rather hopeless but professionally cautious answer.

Another doctor arrived in breathless haste, but as the patient was then being borne into the Carlington residence, the later professional Good Samaritan only glowered, and with great dignity, passed on without stopping—as if he had been going that way by mere accident. Strong arms, not hired for the purpose, but nerved by that instinct one sees active on occasions when sudden calamity silences the logic of political economy and the impulse of human brotherhood has play, bore the old man to a room kept for occasional patients. A more thorough examination showed that the only serious external injuries were bad fractures of the limb which had been caught in the wheel. Vigorous work revived the patient after awhile, the broken limb was set, and properly cared for, and the injured man's torture was relieved by a hypnotic. In the absence of anybody else, "Slick" Blackburn was installed as temporary nurse, and Kate was instructed to "take turns," though of course, she was neither to be relieved of her usual work nor to receive increased compensation. But Kate's sympathies were aroused, and she thought nothing of this. In the presence of human suffering it did not occur to her to exact all the traffic would bear, but she just went right on caring for the gray haired stranger because her heart told her to, and in utter disregard of the beneficent law of supply and demand as applied to the commodity labor. It was quite otherwise with "Slick." Not half an hour had passed until he had "made a bargain" with the Doctor for extra pay, which pay he meant to increase as soon as the patient could talk. For "Slick" had already learned what was to be known about the stranger—that he had been stopping for some days at the Commercial hotel, and seemed to be a man of means. The landlord had so stated to the anxious liveryman, who, in turn, had informed "Slick." The latter had communicated the intelligence to the Doctor, who had informed his wife, and thenceforth the patient received every attention the Carlington household could bestow.

With his head and face bandaged and plastered, little notion could be formed of the injured man's features, and as, by the generous arrangements of "Slick," Kate's "turn" came at night, and, as the light had to be kept turned low, she had no conception at all of her charge's physical appearance. But frequently during the nights of late he had talked with her, and his voice was pleasant and gentle, his manner quiet and fatherly. As she became more unreserved, he sometimes asked her about herself, and, having noticed that whenever he awoke she was always reading by a light in the next room, he had asked her what she was reading, and, in the conversation thus arising, had led her to speak of her deep yearning for an education and of how she expected to acquire it, and to even tell him of her father, of how poor he was, and of her brother John who worked in "the shops" at Graham City.

One day Kate was astonished at being told by her mistress that the Doctor had decided that "Slick" was too careless, and so another nurse had been engaged; that the new nurse was to stay nights, while Kate was to be nurse in day time and was to be relieved of all other duties—another girl having already come. Her mistress further stated that the Doctor wished Kate to sleep and rest after her recent vigils so as to be better able to take up her labor of day nurse on the morrow, and in the meantime her wages would go on as usual. Next morning, bouyant after a good night's rest, Kate went to her charge's room, "tidied up things," let in a little sunshine and sat down to read—the old man being in peaceful slumber. He awoke at last, saw his nurse beside him and greeted her with evident pleasure. Having told her that he had requested the change in order that she might sleep at night and he have pleasant company in day time, he requested her to get a book from a traveling bag which he had just had brought from the hotel, and read to him. It was the book of books for an aspiring poor working girl to read—George Sands' *Consuelo;* the heroine a young Gypsey woman who boasted that she had none but "pure plebeian blood" in her veins.

We need not stay to hear the story read. Suffice it that, in conversation and in reading at intervals, the days went by, the book was finished and the patient improved. One morning when Kate entered he was sitting, or reclining, in an easy chair; the bandages and the patches were gone from his head and face, and she greeted him with an exclamation of honest, girlish delight and surprise. The stranger was tall and of portly frame. His firm but pleasant face had that peculiar frown which accompanies pain, and which, never failing to appear when sympathetic persons see suffering or hear of it, is, when habitual, the sure sign of a benevolent nature. His mobile but grave features indicated a life full of misery philosophically endured, and, clean shaven as he was, he might readily have been taken for one of those broad, good priests everywhere so loved by the poor and so trusted by the sad and the erring. Kate took a seat near him, to which he had motioned her, whereupon he remarked:

"I have been thinking about you ever since early morning. Indeed, I dreamed of you last night."

"Dreamed about me? What did you dream?" she asked with eager curiosity.

"I can't remember the details," said he, "but I saw you a highly educated, distinguished woman; saw you making a speech, and a great audience was applauding you with the utmost enthusiasm."

He looked at her. The girl's face was beaming with delight.

"Oh, if only that could ever come true!" said she, clasping her hands with a gesture of eager impatience to do what the dream had aroused her to hope she might. "Did you dream anything else about my future?"

"Yes. You were married and had a happy home and plenty of money."

"Married, had a happy home—and making speeches?"

"Yes. Why not? Don't men make speeches and be married and have happy homes? But no matter. That dream determined me to talk with you this morning about something which has been on my mind for some time. You are not only beautiful, Kate (she blushed at this), but you are a good, kind-hearted girl. With no expectation of any other compensation than a hired girl's wages, you have taken care of me as if I had been your own father, all these weeks. I am going away soon (Kate looked pained and dismayed), and I cannot endure to leave you here to work for others at wages. At this moment, I do not know that a single being still lives that I love as I do you, my dear. I have more of this world's goods than I need. I have nobody to share what I have. And you must not refuse an old man's request. I have a proposal to make you, Kate."

Kate was horrified. Was he going to ask her to marry him? Dreadful! How could he think of such a thing? She contemplated flight. He noticed her trouble, and, happening to divine the cause of it in the peculiar expression he had used, burst into a laugh that did him infinite good. Kate laughed too, from sympathy, and laughed heartily; but still, "What is he going to ask me to do?" troubled her nevertheless.

"Don't think me such a fool and ingrate," said he, "as to offer my hand, heart and rheumatism to a mere bud like you. Besides, I am sure you do not wish me to commit bigamy. You must excuse me, my dear," said he with mock gravity. "I have no desire to go to prison, though you pine to call me husband. I know what a state prison is. I spent the best twenty-two years of my life as a convict. You must really excuse me from committing bigamy."

Despite his gay tone, a pained look came into his face as he said this. Kate asked in astonishment:

"*You* a convict? *You* in prison? And twenty-two years? How dreadful!"

"It is true, however. Do you not shrink from the ex-convict? I left Sing Sing prison behind me in 1887—only three years ago—and began to reacquire the lost art of buying my own victuals and clothes. Are you not afraid of the old jail bird?"

"No," said Kate, "for I am sure you were not there because you were wicked. Some of the best of men have been in prison or have died on the scaffold. I am sure you were innocent. They put you there because they didn't know you."

"Ah, my good-hearted Kate, the world would be better if judges and juries were as just as you, and thought some of the culprit's nature and not alone of his crime. In criminal courts, *the man* counts for nothing. Only *the charge* gets attention."

"And you are married? You have a wife?" asked Kate. "Yet you spoke so oddly awhile ago."

"Did I? What did I say that was so odd?" asked he.

"You said something about not knowing that a single person still lived that you loved. Something like that."

"Now, my Kate, be honest. Did not I say *this:* 'I do not know that a single being still lives *that I love as I do you!*' Come, now, was not *that* what I said? Is your memory so bad, my little one?"

Kate blushed and laughed roguishly, and answered by asking:

"What makes you say you don't know your wife still lives?"

"Not my wife, only, but my boy as well. I have no knowledge whether they be living or dead."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed Kate. "How sad your life must be."

"Shall I tell you about it all, Kate?"

"Please do. I am so anxious to know about it, and how you came to be shut up so awful long in that horrid prison. Please tell me about it."

For the time, the old man's intended proposal was forgotten. He was living over again the dread past, while his young listener was alert with sympathetic curiosity. He was something of a humorist, and mingled drollery with pathos till the sudden transitions left Kate's feelings in doubt at times whether to make her laugh or cry. In his characteristic way the old man told the story of his life.

CHAPTER II.

MARSHALL OVERTON'S STORY.

—"Oppression starveth in thine eyes,
Upon thy back hangs ragged misery;
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law."—Shakespeare.

"It was just after the close of the war. The big review at Washington was over, I had been mustered out, and, while waiting for some final red-tape proceedings, I went to New York, with my soldier clothes still on, to see the sights for a few days before starting home to my wife and my little boy who were living with my father-in-law in Wisconsin. I had not seen them since my enlistment three years before, when, as the train of box cars loaded with good men pulled out and left home behind, my wife held the little boy in her arms—he was then but two years old—while I bade then good bye. I got to New York in the evening, and was sauntering near Fulton Ferry when I came upon a group of excited people, mostly working people. Making my way way into the group, I discovered the occasion of the excitement. A poor, y clad but good faced woman was trying to shield a little girl who was clinging to her and at whose arm an Irish policeman was tugging violently in an effort to pull her away from her protector. Suddenly, letting go the girl, the villain dealt the woman's arms a savage blow with his club which made her cry out with agony; and glancing, the club cut a gash in the little girl's forehead, which began to bleed and to present a sickening sight. Angered beyond repression, I instinctively put my hand into my pocket and cocked my pistol; and, just as the wretch was about to deal the woman a murderous blow on the head and as her arms went up to avert the assault, I pulled my old reliable, and pointing it dead at him, said: 'You infernal Irish brute, drop that, or I'll drop you.'

"Swiftly changing his club to his left hand, he whipped out his gun and was drawing it on me when I fired and instantly killed the scoundrel. The discharge of my weapon caused two other Irish policemen to rush out of a saloon and run at once to the scene. After making a few hasty inquiries, they called assistance to take the dead man away, and then, swearing at us and violently jerking us—my weapon having been seized—they took the woman and myself to prison. To my great delight, someone in the crowd had, while the two policemen were bustling and swearing, spirited the little girl away, and she was no where to be found. I was locked in a cell, and from that moment till three years ago I never knew liberty again. I have never since seen the woman, nor, for twenty-two years after that evening, did I hear what became of her.

"My trial came on quite speedily. If it had been just a plain, unadorned, every-day sort of murder, my act might probably have passed unnoticed, as in New York in those days many murders did. But I had killed a policeman, and in this country, to be a policeman, and especially an Irish policeman, is, as it once was to be a Roman, greater than to be king. These Mickies constantly whine about the oppression of Ireland's people by the British constabulary; yet the first thing an Irishman hunts after, when he lands on our shores is a job of playing the star-spangled tyrant over the poor of some American city.

"Well, they made it highly unpleasant for me in jail. Quite sultry. They had a coroner's inquest at which all Irish officialdom glared at me in concert. Then they yanked in an impartial jury, specially selected by an Irish bailiff, and tried me for keeps. An Irish judge, contrary to all precedent, refused to allow me to conduct my own defense or to address the jury in my own behalf—knowing I could not appeal, no matter what he might do, but assigned some fool of indefinite nationality to play lawyer for me, and I had been ground out a first-class candidate for the gallows tree before I had fairly got my bearings. I remember that the Mickie judge threw special emphasis on the 'be hanged by the neck,' as if he feared I might misunderstand the sentence of the court and get the erroneous impression that I was to be hanged by the heels.

"Some comrades, still lingering in New York at that time, chanced to hear of my tribulation, and succeeded in bringing to bear some sort of influence which, at the last moment, saved my neck by securing the commutation of my sentence to simply holding down a life time job of hard labor in prison. I once heard an old colored woman say, on being sentenced to the penitentiary for life: 'Seems like a powerful long time to stay dar, jedge.' After my neck had got used to feeling comfortable again and my sleep had become more profound of nights, I sympathized with the old aunty's remark, and I, too, thought it 'a powerful long time to stay dar.'

"And I had done nothing but what any manly man ought to have done under the circumstances, and nothing more than, after all I have suffered for having done it, I would just as readily do again to-day were the same provocation presented."

Kate took the old man's hand in both of her hands as with flashing eyes she said:

"You deserved to be rewarded—not punished. When I read of the wrongs these cruel, over-bearing policemen inflict on the helpless poor, I just wish I could be a man for a few days."

"Ah, little one! the police have all the power on their side, and public opinion either supports them or is indifferent. And to the poor—what an irresistible, merciless power is government! In a certain city, not long ago, I stood on a street corner late at night and looked up at the court house, and, as I gazed in the moonlight at that massive pile of